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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.85/L.56
17 July 1992

ENGLISH ONLY

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 12 (b) of the provisional agenda*

TOPONYMIC EDUCATION AND PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: TRAINING COURSES IN TOPONYMY

Canadian documents for United Nations training courses in toponymy

Paper submitted by Canada**

* E/CONF.85/1/Rev.1.

** Prepared by the secretariat of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

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1. This collection, or "training kit", of Canadian documents addresses various aspects of geographical names standardization. The papers gathered here provide material on the roles of national toponymic authorities; the process of establishing such an administrative framework, processing toponyms and maintaining records; and particular aspects of historical toponymy and of place-naming in a bilingual context.

2. Originally most of these papers were presented in French at the Stage de formation en toponymie held in Québec, 7-19 August 1988. This course was organized by the Commission de toponymie du Québec, under the auspices of the United Nations and in collaboration with the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. Recommendations formulated by trainees at this training course are also included for the benefit of organizers of similar courses in the years to come.

3. Prior to 1992, five United Nations conferences have been held on the standardization of geographical names. Between conferences, the ongoing work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names facilitates the exchange of information on names standardization between member nations, assists in implementing recommendations of the conferences, and maintains the continuity of vital toponymic activities. Resolutions from the conferences have addressed the need for provision of technical aid, including courses in the development of national standardization programmes. Only by encouraging standardization of geographical names at the national level can progress be made towards international standardization, which is particularly important for production of clear, unambiguous cartographic products.

4. We thank the Commission de toponymie du Québec for agreeing to the translation and dissemination in English of the papers from the 1988 course. It is hoped that the training kit assembled here will in its own small way be a useful reference tool for future courses, workshops, or seminars. May it help others to gain insight into the benefits, aims, and processes of national names standardization, and so contribute to a better understanding between nations.

5. The papers included in the training kit are listed below.

Title	Author
The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names	Henri Dorion
A national toponymic authority	Henri Dorion
The mandate and roles of a national names authority	Jean-Paul Drolet
The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names: an overview of its role and activities	J. Hugh O'Donnell

Title	Author
Overview of the toponymic records maintained by the Secretariat of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names	Jocelyne Revie and Helen Kerfoot
The collection and treatment of names for maritime and undersea features	Thérèse Jolicoeur
The administrative framework of a central toponymic agency	Alain Vallières
Inventory and processing	Alain Vallières
Standards concerning the choice of names to be officialized	Marc Richard
Writing geographical names	Marc Richard
Historical toponymy: part of our national heritage and a cultural asset worth preserving	Cécyle Trépanier
Recommendations for the organization of future training courses	Commission de toponymie du Québec
Place-naming in bilingual speech communities: the Ontario experience	André Lapierre

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New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 12 (e) of the provisional agenda*

TOPONYMIC EDUCATION AND PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance to develop national geographical names programmes

Paper submitted by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

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* E/CONF.85/1/Rev.1.

** Prepared by Helen Kerfoot, Executive Secretary, Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

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Background

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was established in pursuance of the Economic and Social Council resolutions to further the standardization of geographical names at both national and international levels. UNGEGN aims to promote the provision of advice, and the "supply of scientific and technical help to developing countries in national standardization of their geographical names."[1] Beyond this, UNGEGN provides assistance to all countries desiring to create national names authorities, as by promoting national standardization, UNGEGN also increases the levels of international standardization.

Rationale

Names standardization at the national level implies the determination and regularization of the most appropriate written form of geographical names and their practical applications, by an authority or a process endorsed by the Government of the country. International standardization may then be concerned with practices which include promoting the use of these nationally-standardized names in a consistent way, and in agreeing on principles governing the use of names of features extending beyond a single sovereignty.

Standardization of the written forms of geographical names is not a mere academic exercise, rather it is a process with very tangible practical benefits. Standard written forms and applications of geographical names are important to government administrators, to industry and commerce, to education and science - they provide a clear, unambiguous geographical reference framework to which other information can effectively be linked. In

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1 Statute of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 1986.

particular, the existence and use of standardized geographical names is invaluable to map and chart producers; to land and water surveyors; to postal, shipping and transportation services; to land, sea and air rescue agencies; to educational and scientific programmes; and to agencies today using geographical names as a basic element of developing information systems.

In addition to the many technical benefits of a geographical names standardization programme, there are direct benefits in a cultural sense, in recording and preserving an important aspect of a country's heritage.

Justification of a national geographical names programme may be difficult in a government environment where other social and economic concerns seem of greater significance. However, on examination it is often found that much money and time are already being expended on names issues, but are being absorbed by different programme areas. Work of cartographic, transport, census, and legal departments, for example, may be overlapping in effort, each collecting and selecting geographical names with no coordination, and likely with conflicting results. A national programme to consolidate this work and to make results consistent and available to a larger public provides greater benefits at less overall cost.

Process

In his manual[2] on national standardization, Orth has addressed the establishment of a national geographical names programme. He identified three basic sequential steps in setting up such a programme:

a) initial concern and effort to start a programme;

b) planning goals and basic principles and procedures; and

c) obtaining legal authority.

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2 Orth, Donald J. (1990): "Organization and functions of a national geographical names standardization programme: a manual." *World Cartography*, Vol. XXI, United Nations, New York, p. 11-40. [Sales No. E.90.I.12].

The methods used for achieving national standardization vary from one country to another, and must be suited to individual needs. The process established may include a decision-making body in the form of a geographical names board; or the authority may be vested in a geographical names office in an existing government department or university; or, if appropriate, more than one government department may have administrative responsibility for different categories of geographical names.

Technical advice

Before major undertakings on names standardization programmes are initiated or developed from existing procedures, a two or three week visit by a technical advisor (or advisors) could be extremely beneficial. Such an individual (or individuals) should have considerable, solid experience with his/her (their) own national names authorities before undertaking such an assignment.

The roles and functions of technical advisors should include various elements of fact-finding, evaluation and recommendation. As far as possible, the country interested in receiving technical advice should provide appropriate background information to facilitate preparations ahead of the scheduled visit.

The following elements are set forth as relevant to the development of a national geographical names standardization programme. It is, however, recognized that not every issue may be addressed in any particular situation.

1) Determining the initial interest and concern for a national geographical names standardization programme

   - key driving force ... management level and "power"
   - existing government structure and decision-making reality
   - other key areas, programmes and individuals to support and participate in the names programme

2) Determining the status quo

   - various authorities, departments, etc. currently involved in geographical names
   - costs and efforts currently expended

- legal authority (if any)
- what are the current primary needs that existing areas endeavour to satisfy
- what records (names and associated materials) exist, including scale(s) of map/chart coverage of various areas of the country
- degree of possible financial/personnel and materiel support availability
- what "local" educational authorities (universities) have materials, interest, expertise, etc.
- administrative, economic, social, and cultural environment in which a names programme would operate

3) Discussing with local management personnel

- type of names authority which would best fit the existing government structure and operation
- status and resources (people, funds, time, facilities) available for staff support activities for focal office
- current and potential users and their needs
- type of geographical names coverage needed (types of names, density, areal coverage, etc.)
- attribute information required in initial and future phases of a standardization programme
- easily available and other existing sources of geographical names information
- local preferences for structure of programme, maintenance of records
- distribution of information and publicity of programmes
- availability of staff and training possibilities (internal and external)
- rationale for programme
- types of legal authority possible
- main issues or problems that are likely to be encountered in the establishment of a national geographical names standardization programme
- language issues of names in relations to official, national and locally-used languages; multilingual usage
- language issues of programme maintenance
- issues concerning transboundary feature names

4) Preparing reporting document to provide recommendations for a framework of programme development based on:

- towards a national standardization programme

  - rationale for development
  - benefits to be attained

- appropriate structure for a national authority

  - type of organization to be established
  - actions required to achieve this
  - implementation plan and schedule

- main objectives of the programme

  - goals to be attained
  - relevance to various other government programmes

- inputs required

  - essential government support required
  - staff support, facilities and materials needed
  - legal authority and government recognition required
  - type of responsibility that must be accorded such a programme
  - budget requirements for initial set-up and for maintenance (office facilities, staff, equipment, supplies, reference documents, training, ongoing acquisitions, etc.)

- activities to be undertaken

  - standardization ideals
  - development of policies, principles and procedures (what types of names to be standardized, what attributes to record, source of names information)
  - establishment of a board and/or a focal office, plus advisory committees and links to universities
  - development of legislation

- organization of staff
- training of staff
- standardization process
- office treatment of names (methods, examples, equipment, etc.)
- recommendations re field collection of geographical names (if/when appropriate)

• outputs anticipated

- establishment of geographical name records - analogue and/or digital
- information for other government authorities re names usage
- provision of standardized names to authorities (e.g. mapping authorities)
- dissemination of information packages on programmes, to media, educational authorities, etc.

• further advice required and appropriate follow-up activities

Within this framework, emphasis will obviously vary, and must be adjusted to individual needs.

5) Arranging for a selection of suitable reference documents to be made available through the UN or from individual countries.

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Acknowledgement

In developing this report I received valuable suggestions from Richard R. Randall, Executive Secretary of the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN), and Donald J. Orth, former Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names, USBGN. I appreciate their expertise and support.

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E/CONF.85/L.58
17 July 1992

ENGLISH ONLY

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
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New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report of New Zealand

Paper submitted by New Zealand**

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* E/CONF.85/1/Rev.1.

** Prepared by W. A. Robertson, Director-General/Surveyor-General, Department of Survey and Land Information; Chairman of the New Zealand Geographic Board.

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BACKGROUND

The New Zealand Geographic Board, constituted under the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 1946, is the authority responsible for geographical place names in New Zealand. The Minister of Survey and Land Information is responsible for the Act.

The Act makes provision for the board to assign or alter a geographic name of any place in New Zealand. The term "place" is defined as being any town, village, special settlement, goldfield or mining district, any land area or other district, place or locality (not being the district, ward or riding of a territorial authority); any railway or railway station; any post office; any mountain, peak, hill, pass, valley, glen , forest, lagoon, swamp, creek, stream, river, ford, lake, bay, harbour, or other natural feature whatsoever.

Excluded from its authority is the naming of territorial authorities and their districts (under the authority of the Local Government Commission); streets and roads (under the authority of Territorial Local Authorities); national parks and reserves (under the authority of the Department of Conservation); and the name of the country, which would require an Act of Parliament.

The Surveyor-General is the permanent chairman of the board and secretarial and technical support is provided by the Department of Survey and Land Information.

Membership of the board include:

- The Surveyor-General (Chairman ex Officio)
- Two persons appointed as representative of the Maori Race
- One person nominated by the NZ Geographical Society
- One person nominated by the Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ
- Two persons nominated on the recommendation of the Minister of Survey and Land Information (one of which is usually the Secretary of Internal Affairs because of his affiliations with territorial local authorities).

The Hydrographer of the Royal New Zealand Navy has been nominated by the board to advise on naming in New Zealand's territorial waters. An Antarctic adviser has also been enlisted to provide specialist advice to help the board fulfil its role as New Zealand's Antarctic Place Names Authority.

The general functions of the New Zealand Geographic Board are:

(a) to adopt rules of orthography and nomenclature in respect of geographic place names in New Zealand;

(b) to examine cases of doubtful spelling of place names, and determine the spelling to be adopted on official maps;

(c) to investigate and determine the priority of the discovery of any geographic features;

(d) to collect original Maori place names for recording on official maps;

(e) to determine what alien names appearing on official maps should be replaced by Maori or British names;

(f) subject to the provisions of the Act, to investigate and determine any proposed alteration of a place name;

(g) to make inquires and recommendations on any matters referred to it by the Minister.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The board task of assigning and altering place names is an ongoing one and in recent years the board has found that its workload has tripled. This has been the result of the board's much more public profile and an increasing public awareness of, and desire to preserve, New Zealand's cultural heritage.

To give an indication of the ratio of Maori place names to European place names in New Zealand, a sample count of nearly 3,000 geographical features on the 1:1,000,000 series of maps revealed that in the North Island 21% were European names and 79% were Maori names while in the South Island 67% of names were European and 33% Maori Names.

Maori Oral History Atlas and Handbook

In 1990 as its contribution to New Zealand's sesquicentennial commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi the board published a Maori Oral History Atlas and a small companion booklet on Understanding Maori Place Names. Respected Maori scholar Mrs Te Aue Davis was contract to produce the Atlas which details eleven groups of Maori place names which are linked together in traditional stories and recorded on an "oral" map.

Original Maori Place Names Project

Mrs Davis has also been employed to set up a network with the local Maori elders and tribal authorities to collect information on original Maori place names in order to fulfil the board's statutory requirement to collect original Maori names for recording on official maps.

Names from the Maori Oral History Atlas and the Original Place Names Project will be stored in the Department of Survey and Land Information's New Zealand place names database on which New Zealand's National Gazetteer is also held. New names, changes in spelling, and the addition of macrons and word divisions identified in the project will be reviewed by the board and where necessary put through the formal procedures to assign or alter a place name.

National Gazetteer and Place Names Database

The national gazetteer and place names database resides on a Vax 8300 VMS computer system in a RDB database management system (DBMS). The national gazetteer has been compiled from the imperial inch to the mile NZMS 1 topographic maps and location information has been mathematically converted into the sheet layout of the 1:50,000 Infomap 260 metric maps. The gazetteer contains over 50,000 individual feature names. The gazetteer is available to the public in paper print-out form, on disk or on microfiche. Currently names capture is being taken directly from the Infomap 260 maps by computerised digital capture. This will give the gazetteer a far greater locational accuracy.

For those Infomap 260's captured, provision has also been made to identify Geographic Board approved names and gazette references. An indicator has also been added to identify names of European or Maori origin. Names showing on the NZMS 1 series and not on the Infomap 260 series and vice versa are being identified and investigated.

International Place Names Conferences

In November 1990 the New Zealand Geographic Board and Department of Survey and Land Information held a South Pacific Place Names Conference. It was a first attempt at bringing together a body of experts of various disciplines to discuss the need for recognition of and research into Maori place names and the cultural links between Maori place names and the range of names found in the Pacific Ocean area.

New Zealand has also increased its profile in the international place names arena. Previously a non-active member of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) United Kingdom Division, New Zealand was accepted as a member of the UNGEGN Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division in 1990. In 1991 New Zealand took over the chairmanship of the division and will host the next UNGEGN Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division meeting to be held in Wellington on 29-30 September 1992. The Department of Survey and Land Information has also taken over responsibility for the UNGEGN divisional projects and is currently working on a 1:10,000,000 place names map of the UNGEGN Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division.

Changes in Toponymic Guide-lines

As the result of recommendations that came out of the South Pacific Place Names Conference the board has adopted, in principle, two significant changes in the presentation of Maori place names. The first is the use of the macron to indicate long vowel length. The second is the implementation of word division in Maori place names. Past practice has been to compound words together. Both these initiatives have been endorsed by the Maori Language Commission and will greatly assist the correct pronunciation and identification of the meaning of Maori place names. Information on the placement of macrons and word division will be collected as part of the Original Maori Place Names Project. Implementation will be gradual and considered on a case by case basis so it will be some time before these initiatives appear on official maps. New computer equipment is also needed to be able to implement the macron as this is not a standard feature of keyboards in New Zealand.

Antarctic Place Names Policy

A managed approach towards Antarctic place naming is being undertaken. The model for that approach is as follows. The New Zealand Geographic Board works in conjunction with the United States of America's Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names (ACAN). Both bodies receive Antarctic place name submissions. These are assessed according to each bodies own rules of nomenclature and on approval they are then submitted to the other country for wider consideration and approval or alteration if any name is at issue.

The New Zealand Geographic Board's general policy guide-line to submitters of Antarctic place names is "That Antarctic names [should] be descriptive or cover Antarctic activity and history or reflect New Zealand's culture and society."

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Original Maori Place Names Project is a major long term project and will take some years to complete.

Other initiatives being undertaken by the New Zealand Geographic Board and the Department of Survey and Land Information include a comprehensive review of the board's current rules of nomenclature and other toponymic guide-lines. Consideration is also being given to updating the hardware and software on which New Zealand's national gazetteer and place names database is held.

Funding is also being sought by the New Zealand Geographic Board to publish historical maps of the North Island and the South Island at 1:1,000,000 which will be wholly expressed in Maori and will illustrate Maori place names circa 1840.

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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division

Paper submitted by the United Nations Group
of Experts on Geographical Names**

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* E/CONF.85/1/Rev.1.

** Prepared by W. A. Robertson, Director-General/Surveyor-General, Department of Survey and Land Information; Chairman of the New Zealand Geographic Board.

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1. SCOPE

1.1 This report covers the activities undertaken by the division in the intervening period since the 15th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names for Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division was held in Geneva, Switzerland, 11-19 November 1991.

2. DIVISION MEETINGS

2.1 The division has not met since its fifth meeting held in Perth 27-28 1990. However the next meeting is scheduled for 29-30 September 1992 and will be held for the first time in Wellington, New Zealand.

2.2 Non-member nations from the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West region are being invited to attend the next division meeting in September 1992 and will be encouraged to become members of the division.

3. DIVISIONAL CHAIRMANSHIP

3.1 New Zealand has now taken up the chairmanship of the division in accordance with a resolution passed at the 12th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok, 20-28 February 1991.

4. REVIEW OF PROJECTS

4.1 Place names map of Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division

4.1.1 At the last divisional meeting held in Perth Australia in 1990 agreement was reached on the possible scale at which a new map of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division should be produced to incorporate New Zealand and Australia, two new members to the division.

4.1.2 A scale of 1:10 million has been chosen so that all the members countries can be shown on one sheet.

4.1.3 New Zealand has sent a diazo print of the proposed map to each member country so that they can provide or confirm which official place names they wish to show on the new map.

4.1.4 On receipt of the place name information New Zealand will prepare a draft compilation map for members to study at the 20-30 September 1992 division meeting. Copies will also be sent to members unable to attend the meeting to check the content.

4.1.5 At the next meeting the issue of donor names and official place names will be addressed for regional and world maps.

4.2 GAZETTEERS

4.2.1 The Second Edition of the Concise Gazetteer and the Regional Gazetteer will be updated once additional or revised information from member countries has been received.